



Global Compacts: “Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants”

Second informal thematic session: “Addressing drivers of migration, including adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters and human-made crises, through protection and assistance, sustainable development, poverty eradication, conflict prevention and resolution.”

Holy See side event: “Ensuring the right of all to remain in dignity, peace and security in their countries of origin.”

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The Right to Remain

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Your Excellencies, etc.

It is an honour to speak at this side Event of the Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, together with the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), Caritas Internationalis and the Center for Migration Studies of New York (CMS) during the second informal thematic session, addressing the drivers of migration. Thank you for the opportunity to share understandings and develop common commitments.

It is also a privilege to speak in the name of the Vatican’s new department for Integral Human Development, dedicated to the fullest development of the whole person and of every person,² “and pays special attention³ to the issues pertinent to the needs of those who are forced to flee their homeland or have none.”

Finally, I am very happy to speak in the name of the Migrants & Refugees Section, whose mission is to assist the Church, its leaders and members and many others, to accompany people forced to flee in each phase of their trajectory: in their country of origin, during their transit, at their destination, and finally their possible return. ***To accompany***, Pope Francis teaches, means

¹ Under-Secretary, Migrants & Refugees Section, Dicastery for promoting Integral Human Development.

² “In order to be authentic, development must be complete: integral, that is, it has to promote the good of every man and of the whole man.” Pope Paul VI, *Populorum progressio*, § 14.

³ Pope Francis, *Statutes of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development*, 17.08.2016.

to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate.⁴ Activating these four verbs would take us far in fulfilling the promise of the New York Declaration and the purpose of the Global Compacts.

Few would deny that today's "Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants" are very complex, and often disorderly, unpredictable and dangerous; have reached crisis proportions; seem likely to continue if not increase; and currently constitute a most alarming issue or topic. Many imaginations seem filled with distressing images, minds cluttered with alarming statistics.

To deal with today's large movements responsibly, a first step is to employ adequate tools of analysis, rather than letting fear and self-interest shape our understanding. On closer examination, there is much to appreciate rather than to fear, and much to do together rather than to reject. For reasons which many of us would sympathize with, people prefer risking their lives in a dangerous journey hoping for better living conditions in country of destination. Let's appreciate the particular realities, before adding up the world scenario, so that protecting the fundamental rights of the many millions involved is always a priority. We need steadiness of purpose and fidelity to our deeper values. Let these be the marks of the current thematic session and indeed of the whole Compacts process.

Everyone wants migration flows be "safe, orderly and regular"; the Sutherland report calls for their "management" or, better, for their "governance". But these values can easily, if unconsciously, get reduced to control, national control. Control is important and legitimate, but represents only one dimension. It cannot be exercised in neglect of other essential factors, many of which are embodied in the right to remain.

The current informal thematic session, the second, wisely seeks to address "the drivers that create or exacerbate large movements". It takes its orientation from Paragraph 43 of the New York Declaration states:

We will analyse and respond to the factors, including in countries of origin, which lead or contribute to large movements. We will cooperate to create conditions that allow communities and individuals to live in peace and prosperity in their homelands. Migration should be a choice, not a necessity. We will take measures, *inter alia*, to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, whose objectives include eradicating extreme poverty and inequality, revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies based on international human rights and the rule of law, creating conditions for balanced, sustainable and inclusive economic growth and employment, combating environmental degradation and ensuring effective responses to natural disasters and the adverse impacts of climate change.⁵

Migration will be "orderly, safe, regular and responsible" (NYD 16) only when people are really free to stay. To make today's migration a choice, not a necessity, is an enormous challenge. It would seem to depend, *inter alia*, on nothing less than the full implementation of the Sustainable

⁴ Cf. Pope Francis, *Address to the International Forum on "Migration and Peace"*, 21.02.2017. To the Mexican Bishops, he said, "Brothers, may your hearts be capable of following these men and women and reaching them beyond the borders" (13.02.2016).

⁵ New York Declaration, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/L.1

Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement. To motivate and orient such an enormous worldwide coordinated effort, will surely take a reliable compass, a shared sense of direction. This is what the Holy See Delegation and the other sponsoring organizations wish to offer under the deceptively simple title “Ensuring the right of all to remain in dignity, peace and security in their countries of origin.” To elaborate and promote the right to remain is deeply rooted in the Church’s faith and in her social teaching. Instead of putting the accent on control, promoting the right to remain is a deeper and more practical way of addressing the root causes. This then is our conviction: in order to prevent forced, involuntary and disorderly migration, that is unmanageable or ungovernable migration, there is a need to reaffirm the right to remain in one’s homeland and to live in dignity, peace, and security. Migration, in other words, needs to flow from a free choice.

And therefore the theme of this side-event: the right to remain is the indispensable basis or condition for the free choice to migrate, to exercise the right to migrate. The right to remain is prior to, is deeper and broader than, the right to migrate. It includes access to the common good, the right to live in dignity, the right to human development. These are rights which should be effectively guaranteed in one’s own country and by one’s own state. Doing so is really to address those drivers of migration which compel people to abandon their homes and countries.⁶

Drivers of migration

So what forces or coerces emigration? What convinces people that it is urgent and necessary to flee? The drivers of forced migration are evils which oblige people to flee because their life and/or the future of their children are at serious risk. The conditions have long been worsening and now become impossible. Worse, there’s absolutely no grounds for projecting a better future.

Accordingly, to assure forced migrants a safe, orderly journey and integration on arrival is good. But it is better and more basic to help them to remain at home where, indeed, the vast majority wants to stay and a small minority can choose to migrate.

What drives involuntary migration?

Experiential drivers Let us first look at the drivers as people actually experience them. Deciding to leave your place is a very hard decision. It can be triggered by something unpredictable like a natural disaster (earthquake, tornado etc.); the continuing danger and the ensuing suffering drive people to leave the area.

In other cases, living conditions gradually become more difficult and dangerous, due to lack of work, criminal organization, corruption,⁷ etc.). Such causes are frequently multidimensional. For

⁶ For example, Gaspar Rivera-Salgado, “The Right to Stay Home: Equity and the struggle of migrant indigenous peoples.” Indigenous Mexican migrants claimed that rather than having migration as the only alternative to make a living, they wanted to have the opportunity to make ends meet and realize their dreams in their home communities. They wanted migration to become the last resort of choice for survival rather than the first and sometimes the only alternative for survival, since they were losing an entire new generation of youth, who in order to escape poverty had to migrate hundreds of miles away in a foreign land where they were losing their traditional ways, their language and their culture.

⁷ Pope Francis, “Corruption is the worst social evil,” 17/11/16.

example, countries which are too poor to offer steady work, are also vulnerable to the disturbances of climate change. War and conflict, persecution and dictatorships are drivers in themselves, and are likely to exacerbate already precarious living conditions.

In fact, the majority of forced migrants avoid going too far away, so their place of refuge is relatively familiar (climate, language, culture, etc.), and they definitely expect to return as soon as conditions permit.

Extreme poverty and inhumane living, without access to water, food and sanitation, healthcare and other necessary infrastructure, are the experiences which drive people out. Such situations, we spontaneously recognize, are not fit for human life. Moreover, personal and family development seem totally out of reach. Unaccompanied child migrants are often fleeing violence or insecurity, and their flight dramatically expresses the total lack of protection, education and so also of any future.

So the experiences which drive people to flee include conflicts and wars, persecutions, dictatorships, famines, destructive weather events and natural disasters....

Submitting these experiences to analysis, then, the social sciences can help us to discover what are called systemic causes or drivers underlying people's experiences and sufferings.

Systemic or underlying causes Among the systemic causes and probably heading the list are the world's worsening inequalities or economic asymmetries. Developed countries benefit from huge multinational businesses and financial corporations which exercise decisive influence in their own interest. By contrast, the so-called developing countries suffer from conditions of production and trade that, far from benefiting their workers and their families, maintain the disadvantageous working and living conditions, the wealth is concentrated elsewhere, and decisions are taken in other parts of the world.

With his customary critical clarity, Pope Francis explains: “‘We need, then, to find ways by which all may benefit from the fruits of the earth, not only to avoid the widening gap between those who have more and those who must be content with the crumbs, but above all because it is a question of justice, equality and respect for every human being.’ One group of individuals cannot control half of the world's resources. We cannot allow for persons and entire peoples to have a right only to gather the remaining crumbs.”⁸

“Ensuring justice means also reconciling history with our present globalized situation, without perpetuating mind-sets which exploit people and places, a consequence of the most cynical use of the market in order to increase the wellbeing of the few. As Pope Benedict affirmed, the process of decolonization was delayed ‘both because of new forms of colonialism and continued dependence on old and new foreign powers, and because of grave irresponsibility within the very countries that have achieved independence.’ For all this there must be redress.”⁹

⁸ Pope Francis, *Address to the International Forum on “Migration and Peace”*, 21.02.2017, quoting Message for the World Day of Peace, 8.12.2013, § 9.

⁹ Pope Francis, *Address to the International Forum on “Migration and Peace”*, quoting Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, § 33.

So the underlying causes or systemic drivers include world economic asymmetries, failed processes of decolonization, economic and therefore political dependence, corruption and poor governance, dominance of multinationals, deprivation or maldevelopment of resources, climate change.

Keeping these two levels in mind - the direct experiences and the underlying causes, let us consider how to address *the drivers* which, if not addressed, will inevitably force people from their homes.

In the long run:

a) Sustainable and inclusive development: Grinding poverty, not only of the essentials but also of all prospect. Such poverty can be addressed only by promoting sustainable and inclusive development in the countries of origin, according to the principle of subsidiarity. To support, in the words of Pope Francis, “processes of development and paths of peace in the countries from which these brothers and sisters are fleeing or have left behind to seek a better future.”¹⁰

b) Reduce self-interest in the allocation and delivery of international assistance: A huge second driver is the (ab)use of overseas assistance to further the interests and advantages of donor countries. Accordingly, programmes of international cooperation, must be freed from the donor’s self-interests. An effective way of doing this is to involve the poor local communities as active protagonists and really promote their interests -- to involve people, in other words, before they are forced to consider becoming migrants!

c) Development assistance must reach and include the poor. “There are millions of sons and daughters of the Church who today live in the diaspora or who are in transit, journeying to the north in search of new opportunities. Many of them have left behind their roots in order to brave the future, even in clandestine conditions which involve so many risks; they do this to seek the “green light” which they regard as hope. So many families are separated; and integration into a supposed “promised land” is not always as easy as some believe.”¹¹

In the medium run:

a) Fostering regional processes (free circulation of workers, regional human chart for migrants and refugees) “Collaborate to create sources of worthy, stable and abundant work, both in the places of origin and in those of arrival, and in the latter, for both the local population and for immigrants. Immigration must continue to be an important factor in development.”¹²

b) Strengthening the process of democratization: “The State does not need to have identical characteristics everywhere: the support aimed at strengthening weak constitutional systems can easily be accompanied by the development of other political players, of a cultural, social, territorial or religious nature, alongside the State. The articulation of political authority at the local, national and international levels is one of the best ways of giving direction to the

¹⁰ Pope Francis, *Address to Caritas Internationalis*, 17/11/2016.

¹¹ Pope Francis, *Address to the Bishops of Mexico in the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Assumption*, Mexico City, 13.2.2016.

¹² Pope Francis, *Address to UNIAPAC*, 17/11/2016.

process of economic globalization. It is also the way to ensure that it does not actually undermine the foundations of democracy.”¹³

c) Promoting bilateral and multilateral agreements on migration and asylum: “A more decisive and constructive action is required, one which relies on a universal network of cooperation, based on safeguarding the dignity and centrality of every human person. This will lead to greater effectiveness in the fight against the shameful and criminal trafficking of human beings, the violation of fundamental rights, and all forms of violence, oppression and enslavement.”¹⁴

In the short run:

a) Stopping the sale of arms to countries with on-going (or potential) internal or international conflicts “Today, too, the victims are many.... How is this possible? It is so because in today’s world, behind the scenes, there are interests, geopolitical strategies, lust for money and power, and there is the manufacture and sale of arms, which seem to be so important!”¹⁵

b) Reducing the unscrupulous exploitation of territories and resources: “The first task is to put the economy at the service of peoples. Human beings and nature must not be at the service of money. Let us say NO to an economy of exclusion and inequality, where money rules, rather than service. That economy kills. That economy excludes. That economy destroys Mother Earth.”¹⁶

c) Opening new and accessible channels for asylum and legal migration: “With regard to migrants, I would ask that legislation on migration be reviewed, so, while respecting reciprocal rights and responsibilities, it can reflect a readiness to welcome migrants and to facilitate their integration. Special concern should be paid to the conditions for legal residency, since having to live clandestinely can lead to criminal behaviour.”¹⁷

Conclusion

In conclusion, we ask: Will migration flows prove controllable, manageable and governable, if they are driven by inequity and injustice? By considering the drivers, we see that disorderly, unpredictable and dangerous migration flows are a barometer of injustice. Indeed they are linked, in inverse proportion: the less justice and equality, the more forced or “driven” migration. In response, we have considered the right to remain. The most honest and comprehensive way of addressing the drivers of forced migration it to *ensure the right of all to remain in dignity, peace and security in their countries of origin.*

Let us listen to Pope Francis address: “The human promotion of migrants and their families begins with their communities of origin. That is where such promotion should be guaranteed, joined to the right of *being able* to emigrate, as well as the right to *not be constrained* to emigrate, namely the right to find in one’s own homeland the conditions necessary for living a

¹³ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, § 41.

¹⁴ Pope Francis, Message for the 101st World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2015), *Church without frontiers, Mother to all.*

¹⁵ Pope Francis, *Homily*, 13/9/2014.

¹⁶ Pope Francis, *Address to the Popular Movements*, Santa Cruz, Bolivia, 9/7/2015.

¹⁷ Pope Francis, Message for the 2016 World Day of Peace, 8/12/2015.

dignified life. To this end, efforts must be encouraged that lead to the implementation of programmes of international cooperation, free from partisan interests, and programmes of transnational development which involve migrants as active protagonists.”¹⁸

¹⁸ Pope Francis, *Address to the International Forum on “Migration and Peace”*, 21.02.2017, with reference to Benedict XVI, *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees*, 12.10.2012.